

Florida Department of Education

The SDFSCA State Grants Program:

The SDFSCA State Grants Program is established under Title IV, Subpart I of NCLB. The program provides funds to State and local educational agencies and Governors to support the implementation of programs and activities designed to prevent youth drug use and violence. Funds are awarded to State educational agencies and Governors based on a formula included in the statute. State educational agencies sub-grant funds to local school districts based on a statutory formula; Governors award funds to community-based organizations and other entities on a competitive basis.

1. Currently as implemented, what are the strengths of the SDFSCA State Grants Program? What are the elements of the State Grants Program that are working and addressing the needs of students and schools today?

One of the strengths of the SDFSCA program is that it provides a school-based prevention infrastructure at the SEA and LEA levels and is the cornerstone of youth drug prevention and intervention efforts within the state of Florida. It provides effective programs, services, and activities, such as K-12 science-based prevention curricula, student assistance programs, law and civic education, school-wide discipline strategies, drug testing, peer resistance training, crisis management planning, information dissemination about the dangers of drug use and violence, school resource officers, parent programs, peer mediation programs and youth-created video broadcasts explaining the dangers of substance use. It also provides education in drug and violence prevention concepts to teachers and other program implementers/coordinators in many of the 3,700+ schools throughout the state.

The SDFSCA program is the backbone of the youth prevention efforts in the state and is the portal into schools for all drug and violence prevention activities. Additionally, through the Governor's Office's portion of the funds, community-based organizations (CBOs) have an opportunity to receive funds from the program to use for prevention activities in their communities. Funds are used to recruit partners who commit additional resources and manpower to make programs optimally effective for their communities. This program has historically been a catalyst for community involvement, volunteerism, and the leveraging of funding from other sources to address drug and violence prevention and intervention throughout Florida.

Therefore, one of the most critical elements to the success of the program is the infrastructure that has been created both at the state and local levels, to coordinate prevention efforts across the state. At the state level, the Governor's Office of Drug Control and the Florida Department of Education work with other state agencies such as the Departments of Children and Family, Health, and Juvenile Justice, to coordinate prevention efforts across the state. At the local level, LEAS and CBOs have staff to coordinate prevention efforts.

Another element is the use of the "Principles of Effectiveness" to provide a structure upon which programming is based. LEAs and CBOs conduct needs assessments, set measurable goals, implement science-based programming, and evaluate their efforts. LEAs and community-based organizations are provided the flexibility to address specific issues based on needs following the "Principles of Effectiveness" and implementing authorized activities.

2. Is the SDFSCA State Grants Program working effectively to promote safe and drug-free schools across the country, specifically in rural, urban, and suburban settings? What are the difficulties in determining the effectiveness of the program? Are there mechanisms that could be proposed that would help determine if programs being supported with SDFSCA State Grants Program funds are effective in meeting program purposes?

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

As mentioned earlier, the program provides funding for state- and local-level infrastructure for youth prevention efforts. As part of the statewide infrastructure, the Florida Department of Education has a unique partnership with the Governor's Office of Drug Control, and the Departments of Children and Families, the Health, and Juvenile Justice. These collaborations have resulted in the development of a statewide prevention system and statewide drug control strategy; data collection efforts such as the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS), Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and Florida Youth Tobacco Survey; statewide initiatives such as Changing Alcohol Norms (CAN): Florida's Initiative to Lower Youth Drinking; an increase in the number of community coalitions; the development of the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) Practice Materials Using Prevention Concepts; and support or sponsorship of the Florida Drug Summit, the Florida Statewide Prevention Conference, and Family Day.

At the LEA level, Florida requires all districts to evaluate at least one program implemented with SDFS funding. These evaluations provide valuable data on program effectiveness as well as feedback on implementation. However, local school districts often struggle with the balance between spending funds on programming or evaluation. The SDFS program developed a guide to assist district with evaluations entitled, *Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Handbook for Coordinators, Understanding the Process of Program Evaluation*, a copy of which can be found online at:

http://www.unf.edu/dept/fie/sdfs/eval_manual.pdf

STATE-LEVEL DATA

Because of this collaborative statewide prevention effort, the state of Florida has been able to collect data on youth substance use from the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS). From 2000-2005, results show:

Alcohol

- Decreased **current use of alcohol** (past 30 days) by **10%**, from 34.3% (2000) to 30.8% (2005).
- Decreased **binge drinking** by **19%**, from 18.8% (2000) to 15.2% (2005).
- Increased the mean **age of first use of alcohol** from 12.3 years (2000) to 12.7 (2005).

Tobacco

- Decreased **current use of cigarettes** (past 30 days) by **43%**, from 18.4% (2000) to 10.5% (2005).
- Decreased **current use of smokeless tobacco** (past 30 days) by **34%**, from 6.2% (2000) to 4.1% (2005).
- Increased the mean **age of first use of cigarettes** from 12.0 years (2000) to 12.4 (2005).

Marijuana

- Decreased current use of marijuana (past 30 days) by 43%, (from 7.9 in 2000 to 4.5 in 2005) for students in grades 6-8. Decreased current use of marijuana (past 30 days) by 24% (from 19.8 in 2000 to 15.0 in 2005) for students in grades 9-12. This averages to a **28% decrease** from 14.4% (2000) to 10.4% (2005) for students in grades 6-12.
- Increased the mean **age of first use of marijuana** from 13.2 years (2000) to 13.6 (2005).

Other Drugs

- Decreased **current use of any illicit drug excluding marijuana** (past 30 days) by **27%**, from 9.3% (2000) to 6.8% (2005).

Battery Incidents Past 12 Months

- Decreased the incidence of **attacking someone with the intention of hurting them** (past 12 months) by **35%**, from 18.1% (2000) to 11.7% (2005).

COUNTY-LEVEL DATA

To measure program effectiveness at the local level, the Florida Department of Education reviews LEA-level data, as provided in the SDFS/LEA Progress Report. Below are some of the results of the data for 2004-2005:

Alcohol Use (Past 30 Days)

- **Duval County School District** reported a decrease of **51%** among 6-12th graders reporting use of alcohol, from 24.6% in 1999 to 12% in 2004. (Source: Duval County Survey)
- **Pinellas County School District** reported a decrease of **44%** among 5-12th graders reporting use of alcohol, from 35% in 2000 to 19.76% in 2004. (Source: Prevalence of Substance Use among Pinellas County Students)

Alcohol Binge Drinking

- **Okeechobee School District** reported a decrease of **74%** among 6-12 graders reporting binge drinking, from 10.1% in 2000 to 2.6% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)

Tobacco Use (Past 30 Days)

- **Broward County School District** reported a decrease of **44%** among 6-12 graders reporting tobacco use, from 14.0% in 2000 to 7.8% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)
- **Duval County School District** reported a decrease of **48%** among 6-12 graders reporting tobacco use, from 19.1% in 1999 to 10% in 2004. (Source: Duval Survey)
- **Leon County School District** reported a decrease of **50%** among 6-12 graders reporting tobacco use, from 21.1.0% in 2000 to 10.6% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)
- **Lee County School District** reported a decrease of **50%** among 6-12 graders reporting tobacco use, form 21.0% in 2000 to 10.6% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)
- **Madison County School District** reported a decrease of **43%** among 6-12 graders reporting tobacco use, form 21.80% in 2000 to 12.4% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)
- **Martin County School District** reported a decrease of **41%** among 6-12 graders reporting tobacco use, form 25.1% in 2000 to 14.7% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)
- **Pinellas County School District** reported a decrease of **42%** among 5-12 graders reporting tobacco use, form 21% in 2000 to 12.22% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)
- **St. Johns County School District** reported a decrease of **43%** among 6-12 graders reporting tobacco use, form 23.2% in 2000 to 13.3% in 2004. (Source: Prevalence of substance use Among Pinellas County students)

Smokeless Tobacco Use (Past 30 Days)

- **Baker County School District** reported a decrease of 36% among 6-12 graders reporting smokeless tobacco use from 18.9% in 2000 to 12.1% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)

- **Flagler County School District** reported a decrease of **74%** among 6-12 graders reporting smokeless tobacco use, from 10.1% in 2000 to 2.6% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)

Marijuana Use (Past 30 Days)

- **Martin County School District** reported a decrease of **41%** among 6-12 graders reporting marijuana use, from 25.1% in 2000 to 14.7% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)
- **Marion County School District** reported a decrease of **41%** among 6-12th graders reporting marijuana use, from 18.6% in 2000 to 10.9% in 2004. (FYSAS)
- **Polk County School District** reported a decrease of **50%** among 6-12 graders reporting marijuana use, from 17.6% in 2000 to 8.8% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)

Illicit Drug Use Excluding Marijuana (Past 30 Days)

- **Hillsborough County School District** reported a decrease of **41%** among 6-12 graders reporting illicit drug use, from 12.8% in 2000 to 7.6% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)

Battery Incidents Past 12 Months

- **Clay County School District** reported a decrease of **31%** among 6-12 graders who reported attacking someone with intents of hurting another person, from 19.8% in 2000 to 13.7% in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)
- **Seminole County School District** reported a decrease of **35%** among 6-12 graders who reported attacking someone with intents of hurting another person, from 16.2% in 2000 to 10.45 in 2004. (Source: FYSAS)

USE OF PROVEN PROGRAMS

From 1999-2005, the number of proven prevention programs in use in LEAs increased almost 300%, from 11 in 1999-2000 to 32 in 2005-2006. These proven programs are: *Too Good For Drugs*, *Second Step*, *Life Skills Training*, *Peer Mediation*, *Project ALERT*, *Too Good For Drugs and Violence*, *Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders*, *Bullying Prevention (Olweus)*, *Reconnecting Youth*, *Growing Healthy*, *Peers Making Peace*, *Too Good For Violence*, *Gangs Resistance and Education Training (GREAT)*, *Peacemakers*, *Positive Action*, *Project SUCCESS*, *Westchester Student Assistance*, *Aggression Replacement Training (ART)*, *Community of Caring*, *Families that Care Guiding Good Choices*, *Functional Family Therapy (FFT)*, *Good Behavior Game*, *Kid Power*, *PeaceBuilders*, *Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT)*, *Prevention Alcohol Education Program*, *Project ACHIEVE*, *Project Northland*, *Project Toward No Tobacco (TNT)*, *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)*.

PROMOTION OF SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, SPECIFICALLY IN RURAL, URBAN, AND SUBURBAN SETTINGS

At the local level, since the SDFSCA is based on a formula, it guarantees funding for all LEAs to promote safe and drug-free schools. If the grants were competitive, rural districts, which often lack grant writers, may go without any funding. In Florida, there are 72 LEAs. To maximize the funds for the smaller districts, Florida has two consortia, which pull together the smaller LEAs' funds and are able to provide coordinated programming and activities designed to have more of an impact on student prevention activities.

Larger schools districts have such diverse populations and communities within their districts that not all areas of prevention can feasibly be addressed in all schools. The

flexibility of the program allows districts to target the areas of highest need as determined by the districts' needs assessments.

DIFFICULTIES

For the Governor's portion to the CBOs, the competitive grants are only funded for one year. It is often difficult to show program effectiveness in a year, especially if the program is new, due to program start-up time, etc. It would be more effective to fund them for at least three years.

There is much collaboration occurring in the prevention area. Therefore, many different programs may be included under "the program," and not all be funded out of SDFSCA funds. As a result, it is very difficult to measure any one program, because they are interwoven under a prevention plan. With so many programs it is also very difficult to determine any cause and effect as to the effectiveness of any one particular program. Unlike a laboratory setting, most of what is being implemented is being done so within an actual school or community setting. This often prevents a comparison study of effectiveness as it could deprive particular groups of students from receiving necessary services.

Implementation of programs with fidelity is somewhat difficult due to conflicting priorities. With a limited amount of time in a school day, getting full prevention programs (with all modules being used) into the classroom can be difficult.

PROPOSED MECHANISMS

Review and revisit the criteria by which the PART score is determined to ensure that the PART and the program's outcomes are aligned. In revisiting the criteria, work with states to determine the best program indicators to use to reflect program performance.

Encourage states with multiple small LEAs to set up consortia to maximize their funds.

Current law requires states to collect data based on the Uniformed Management Information Reporting System (UMIRS). Once the federal UMIRS uniformed data set is established, this should help with national performance measures.

3. Are there emerging issues facing students and schools today that the SDFSCA State Grant Program does not address and should they be addressed in the SDFSCA State Grants Program?

Demonstrating the connection between school climate, behavior, and academic achievement is critical to the success of this program. There are very few venues for prevention education and programming to be implemented at other than schools, yet the school day is very full. It is the balancing of these that is difficult.

Another issue is not enough funding for prevention for all students. Limited funds make it necessary to implement the proven effective programs with a relatively small percentage of the students.

4. The SDFSCA State Grants Program includes a focus on safety. Sec. 4114 (d)(7) states that recipients of the SDFSCA State Grants must have "a plan for keeping schools safe and drug-free" including, a "crisis management plan". Considering the Nation's focus on emergency response and crisis planning is this language sufficient to address the concern for crisis management in our schools or are? Are further guidance or other steps necessary to address this concern?

Yes, this language is sufficient to address the concern for crisis management. Florida statutes require school board to formulate and prescribe policies and procedures for emergency drills and for actual emergencies, including, but not limited to, fires, natural disasters, and bomb threats, for all the K-12 public schools. Additionally, the district school boards are required to establish model emergency management and emergency preparedness procedures for the life-threatening emergencies such as weapon-use and hostage situations, hazardous materials or toxic chemical spills; weather emergencies, including hurricanes, tornadoes, and severe storms; and exposure as a result of a manmade emergency.

It would be a benefit to states and LEAs if state-level administrative funds were made available to help states coordinate crisis management planning for LEAs. In the early 2000s, the Florida Department of Education received a grant from the Florida Department of Community Affairs, which allowed FDOE to survey school districts as to their emergency preparedness; develop standards, criteria, and guidelines for safe schools emergency management plans; develop school emergency management planning training; offer regional trainings; provide statewide technical assistance and training; review school districts emergency management plans; and establish a school emergency management planning website. That funding is no longer. The current ERM grants only help a handful of LEAs and can lead to duplication of efforts and costs.

The USED's *Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities* document has been useful in that it presents the need for a four-phase approach to emergency planning for school districts.

Some suggested steps to improve further school emergency planning efforts:

- Enhanced coordination with Department of Homeland Security/FEMA on the development of curricula for school safety planning. They have an established delivery mechanism for training through the Emergency Management Institute, State Training Officers and Independent Study Program.
 - Guidance on drills and exercises--perhaps suggested minimum standards as well as a databank of scenarios that schools and districts could use.
 - Development of video resources, such as a school shooting simulation, panel discussions, presentations, etc., that can be used in training district and school personnel, school resource officers, etc.
 - Promotion of the National Incident Management System/Incident Command System for school districts.
 - Guidance related to recovery in general and mental health recovery (both medium- and long-range) in particular.
5. Is the structure of the SDCFCA State Grants Program (awarding funds to the State Education Agency and the Governor), the most effective mechanism for the use of these funds?

Yes, without the infrastructure established by awarding the funds to the State Education Agency and the Governor, opportunities for technical assistance, networking, monitoring, and guidance on law interpretation as well as other aspects would be greatly limited. If the funds were competitive, as the national program funds are, then fewer LEAs and students would receive funding for prevention, and there would be the issue of program sustainability.

6. Is the balance between flexibility and accountability contained in the statute working? Could State and local flexibility be balanced with additional core requirements that would encourage LEAs to address specific issues?
7. How can the tension between the *Principles of Effectiveness* provisions that require that funds be spent on research-based activities and the broad list of authorized activities (many of which lack a strong research base) be resolved?

The list of authorized activities should be reviewed for relevancy and evaluation purposes. Remove activities from the list that do not provide direct services and encompass efforts that would be better addressed through other funding sources.

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